

Dear Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Luis Luna. I live in New Haven. I'm an organizer with the Connecticut Working Families Party, member of the Semilla Collective and the Husky 4 Immigrants Coalition.

I stand in support of **S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS**. We are grateful for the work and the support of members of this committee in expanding access to Husky up to the age of 8, and put our trust in you to expand Husky up to the age of 18 this legislative session. I say that not only for the undocumented community members that I know but for my own family.

One of my cousins, who is 17, had three surgeries to have a brain tumor removed, when she was very young in Ecuador. After she moved to Connecticut, she has needed a lot of care, from psychologists, neurosurgeons, pediatric oncologists and more. Her parents have applied for the Free Care Program at Yale but not all costs are covered and sometimes the free care is denied for various reasons. They have paid thousands and thousands of dollars out of pocket. Two years ago, Monse had a series of migraine attacks that lasted for months. The migraine attacks were so severe that she started to vomit and they had to call the ambulance three times. Everyone of those costs has come out of pocket and caused great financial and mental strain to our family. This bill would be a lifesaver for children like my cousin Monse. However, by the time this bill is implemented, she will age out.

That's why, after we expand access to age 18, we need to continue expanding access for all of our community members. This is an issue that causes me pain and stress every day. Last summer, my father, who lives in Manchester, suffered a heart attack. When I picked him up from the hospital a couple of days later, I learned he had been worried the whole time, not only about his heart but also about the cost of the lifesaving stent procedure they had administered. He shared that when he was admitted he refused to eat because he also knew that every meal he had inside the hospital would be expensive and it would be passed onto him. A few weeks later a thirty thousand dollar bill came to his house. My father is a home owner and has been filing and paying taxes since 1991. That is over thirty years of him contributing medicaid, social security and other federal and state taxes, but he gets nothing in return.

The bill we have before us today won't help my dad or cousin or thousands of other undocumented folks, but it will help so many children in Connecticut today. Let's take advantage of this opportunity to crack the door further open to healthcare access. Healthcare is a human right, and I know each one in this committee will agree with that. Thank you in advance for supporting this crucial legislation.

Thank you for your time,

Luis Luna
New Haven CT

Working Families Party
Semilla Collective
The Husky 4 Immigrants Coalition